CONNECTING THE DOTS: DEAF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN EHDI PROGRAMS
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National EHDI Conference
Chicago
March 1-2, 2010
AUTHENTIC INCLUSION

- Deaf community members – small in number, unique orientation
- Decision-making intentions are good – but
- Often exclusion has led to ineffective decisions leading to unacceptable outcomes
- Authentic inclusion
  - organized system of referral and access to the deaf community for all families
  - monetary compensation for the deaf community member who is providing a professional level of "care" to families
  - equal representation of deaf and hearing individuals
Member of each state’s infant hearing program through representation on state advisory councils - same voting rights and responsibilities as other members

Deaf community members as service providers in local early intervention systems - certified teachers, social workers, nurses, other health care professionals, mentors

Organized system of deaf community members trained as family mentors and supported with professional pay scales – managed through state hearing screening program or state office for deaf and hard of hearing citizens

Early intervention systems (state and local) to have a strong collaborative relationships (endorsed by and mandated by state Part C) with state schools for the deaf as a vital link to the deaf community in each state
DEAF AND HEARING PARTNERSHIPS

A close look on History...
Research findings
Personal Experiences
Do Deaf People Need Hearing?
Do Hearing People Need Deaf?

History
- Gallaudet – Clerc
- ASDC
  - Family networking
DEAF AND HEARING PARTNERSHIPS

- Families who have regular contact with deaf adults obtain significant benefits including Social Support, Improved Communication, Acceptance and Understanding (Meadow-Orlans, Mertens & Sass-Lehrer, 2003; Hintermair, 2000)

- English language performance better with experiences with Deaf Mentors (Watkins, Pittman, Walden, 1998)

- Social-emotional development supported by opportunities for interactions with Deaf adults/children (Calderon & Greenberg, 2003)

- Children/families in “Shared Reading Program” more frequent book sharing (Delk & Weidekamp, 2001)
Typical experience: my mom’s life

We need each other because...
- Parenting
- Literacy
- Social and Political connections
- Modeling
- Networking

And look at us......
PARENT TRANSITIONS

- The Importance of First Contacts
- Making Emotionally Healthy Decisions About Language and Communication
- Making Lasting Connections that Benefit Your Child and Your Family
- Being Involved in Your Child’s Life
TWO GENERAL TYPES OF DEFINITION FOR “DEAF COMMUNITY”

1. Clinical/pathological
   Takes the behaviors and values of the hearing majority as the “standard” or the “norm” and then see how Deaf people deviate from it.

2. Cultural
   Focuses on the language, experiences, and values of a particular group of people who happens to be Deaf.
Where a person fits on the continuum depends on the coming together of many factors, such as:

- Family and Community Support and Motivation
- Positive and empowerment image
- Opportunities to develop and use communication is abundant, valued, and natural.
BUILDING BRIDGES

- Why did the deaf child cross the bridge?
  - To learn and develop into a well-rounded person
  - Connect family, education, identity

- Bridges take time and engineering to construct
- Need foundation, materials, tools

- Build in both directions
- Trust, dialogue, participation
- Common goal = child development
ENCOURAGING DEAF COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO BE INVOLVED AND NEXT STEPS

- Welcome deaf community to EHDI meetings (provide ASL interpreters)
- Appoint ASL deaf member(s) to advisory committee
- Identify, develop, and advertise ASL resources for families
- Recruit, train, and retain deaf mentors for new families
- Recruit and train ASL families for family support system
CONNECTING Qs TO As

QUESTIONS?